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ABSTRACT

In order to provide secondary school publications advisors with a succinct, single source of guidelines for effective advising, a statement of principles was prepared and submitted to an expert jury. This jury agreed with the statement but offered suggestions for revision and reorganization. Items in the statement are organized in one group of journalistic skills and one group of educational principles necessary for effective advising. Another component of written material, concerning characteristics of effective publications, was also prepared for advisors and approved by the same jury. Future action should include dissemination of such statements to secondary school administrators. (Appended to theis paper are the statements of principles of advising secondary school student publications and lists of the values of such publications and of the characteristics of effective secondary school student publication.) (JM)

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A CODIFICATION OF PRINCIPLES OF ADVISING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

By

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Secondary school administrators continue to appoint persons with neither experience nor education in publications advising to advise student publications in their schools. Some of these advisers choose to get by with as little information and effort as possible until they can turn their advising duties over to someone else. Others attempt to gather information from printed materials, other advisers, workshops and other sources to make the best of the situation and perhaps become effective advisers.

In an attempt to help this latter group and as part of a larger study and of preparations for the 30th annual Ohio University Workshop on High School Publications in June 1975, this writer analyzed adviser needs and instructional design to maximize the amount of important information made available to participating advisers within the confines of an intensive five-day in-service program.

Review of the literature showed that ample material is readily available on teaching secondary school journalism, but almost nothing of substance is available on advising secondary school student publications. Information on advising is scattered in bits and pieces in books, pamphlets and articles published from about 1929 to the present. Entire books deal with the content of high school journalism courses, but there is no comprehensive source of information for advising student publications.

Method

To provide advisers with helpful guidelines succinct enough that they could be assimilated and understood in a short time, a statement of

"Principles of Advising Secondary School Student Publications" was prepared, drawn from several publications and experience, and was submitted to an expert jury for review, revision and validation.

A secondary objective of the principles was to achieve a statement that could be communicated to principals, superintendents, school board members and other school administrators to help them better understand the essential concepts of student publications. This was not an attempt to provide an exhaustive, all-inclusive set of guidelines or a full explanation of the rationale behind them for those who have time to read volumes or enroll in semester courses in advising.

In selecting and writing the principles, the dictionary definition of "principle" was adhered to as rigorously as possible: "a basic truth, law, or assumption; a rule or standard; a basic, or essential, quality or element determining intrinsic nature or characteristic behavior; a basic source."

Principles were drawn from many sources, including Springboard to Journalism, Secondary School Activities, The Effective Student Activities Program, Allied Activities in the Secondary School, Extracurricular Activities, Guidelines for Effective Student Publications and Journalism Instructional Programs and the answer to one question in George Arnold's written comprehensive examination for the Ph.D. degree in journalism at Ohio University.[1]

The statement of principles was submitted in April 1975 to a jury of John M. Butler, University of Iowa, chairman of the Quill and Scroll board of judges and executive director of the Iowa High School Press Association; Dr.

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[1]For complete bibliographical information, see page 6

Louis E. Ingelhart, chairman of the Ball State University Department of Journalism and instigator of Guidelines for Effective Student Publications and Journalism Instructional Programs; Dr. John A. Boyd, Indiana State University, executive director and past president of the National Council of College Publications Advisers and author of a 1960 Ed.D. Thesis, High School Newspaper Advisers in Indiana and Their Instructional Programs in Journalism; and Col. Charles E. Savedge, headmaster of Augusta Military Academy and president of the Columbia Scholastic Press Advisers Association.

The jury expressed substantial agreement with the proposed principles. Most of their suggestions for revision were implemented. Besides revising several statements, four items were added, three were deleted and three were divided into two for clearer presentation. At the suggestion of Butler, the items were reorganized into one grouping of journalistic skills, usually learned or developed in journalism courses, and one grouping of educational principles necessary for effective advising, usually related primarily to education courses and teaching experiences.

The statement of principles, as submitted to adviser participants in the 30th annual Ohio University Workshop on High School Publications, is appended.

Another component of written material prepared for the advisers was "Characteristics of Effective Secondary School Student Publications." These characteristics are more readily available than are the advising principles and were drawn largely from Springboard to Journalism, Quill and Scroll Newspaper and Newsmagazine Evaluation Score Book and Judges' Review, Guidelines for Effective Student Publications and Journalism Instructional Programs and Yearbook Fundamentals of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. This

statement was submitted to the same expert jury in June 1975. They made very few suggestions for revision. This statement also is appended.

As a further part of the larger study, an attempt was made to determine whether advisers, even without instruction, sense some of the principles and characteristics and to determine whether a short workshop could make significant gains in adviser knowledge and appreciations. A pretest was administered to the advisers at their opening workshop session. The principles, characteristics and other written materials were distributed to them at their second session. Flexibility of the week's program was emphasized. Advisers could choose from the sessions being presented to the high school students in the workshop and their participation in advisers' sessions was voluntary.

To avoid testing merely what had been consciously and carefully taught to the advisers, the posttest was administered three and one-half days after the pretest and before the principles and characteristics were discussed by the advisers group. Analysis of data from the pretest and posttest is under way and will be reported at a later time.

Conclusion

Codification of principles of advising secondary school student publications was undertaken to give advisers a succinct single source of essential precepts necessary for effective advising. The expert jury substantially agreed with the statement but offered suggestions for significant revision and reorganization.

Like most statements of principles, this one is subject to revision as conditions warrant. Groups such as the AEJ Secondary Education Division may

want to discuss and modify it for their members and the prospective publications advisers whose educations they supervise.

Future action should include dissemination of the statement, or one of similar scope, to secondary school administrators to help them better understand student publications in today's secondary schools and to foster dialogue between administrators and supervisors.

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PRINCIPLES OF ADVISING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Student publications advising

1. is an integral part of the educational process and should be performed as competently and carefully as all other parts of that process.

2. is the guidance of learning activities in a human laboratory that prepares and publishes student publications.

3. aims to help students gain specific understandings of
   a. the publication as a social force or entity.
   b. the First Amendment and its practical applications.
   c. the nature of news and news judgment.
   d. fact gathering and organizing.
   e. writing for a reader or readership.
   f. editing skills.
   g. modern print production techniques.
   h. the publication as an economic entity.
   i. cooperative productiveness.
   j. planning work flow and schedules to publish on time.

4. requires professional skill based on specific professional education and experience.

5. requires competence in journalistic education to teach students techniques and ethical and legal concepts and to help them develop their skills.

The student publications adviser must

1. have preparation in journalistic writing, editing, design and layout, photography, advertising, ethics and law, history, and the relationship of mass media to American society.

2. offer all editors and staff members sound advice but never write, edit, produce, or censor the publication.

3. work to establish trust and respect among the school community that the adviser, the student journalists, and their publication can be trusted to handle stories dealing with delicate or controversial material.

4. be knowledgeable or skilled in the production techniques of the publication he or she advises.

5. establish a working relationship, regular open discussion, and mutual trust between the administration and the student publications personnel, never losing sight of the functions and rights of the student press and always facilitating a clear understanding of them on the part of the administration.

6. function as liaison with the administration for an understanding of the ethics and responsibilities of a free press and of student publications. In this role the adviser must insure full communication of administrative policy to student editors as well as communication to administrators of the duty of the institution to allow full and vigorous freedom of expression.

7. establish quality of published material through guidelines determined with students beforehand so they will know what is expected of them and will be willing, perhaps eager, to rewrite and revise where necessary.

8. work to educate other teachers and staff members, administrators, and other publics about the nature and function of the student press.

9. always keep in mind the importance of the student in student publications and measure the worth of the publication in terms of the desirable development of staff members and the values to the school.

10. encourage the staff to be accurate, fair, complete, intelligent, and reasonable in carrying out their publications functions.

11. be a severe but sympathetic critic, believing in results, not promises.

12. at all times remain a respected professional educator.

13. resist attempts to make his or her contract dependent upon awards that the publication wins and resist temptations to demand unreasonable amounts of work from the students or to do the work himself or herself in an attempt to win top awards.

(Items 1 through 4 are essentially journalistic skills. Items 5 through 13 are essentially educational principles necessary for effective advising.)

The student publications adviser should

1. guide in the formation of the basic policies and procedures for the publication through discussion with the editors and editorial board.

2. advise and supervise the activities of the student staff members of the publication.

3. instill into the staff objective attitudes toward the work and make apparent the need for prompt and efficient execution of assignments.

4. help to maintain fiscal stability of the publication and insure that it reaches its long-range financial goals. If there is a separate business adviser, the editorial adviser should plan with him or her for the financing and distribution of the publication and financing of equipment used in production.

5. as the representative of the school, sign contracts made with printing and photography firms for work to be done in connection with production of student publications. If contracts are signed by someone else in the school, any income or benefits from these contracts should accrue to the publication involved.

6. help determine the use of income from service projects that the student staffs undertake.

7. advise the editor in the planning for each issue or deadline. The publication should be carefully planned, not just "happen." Both content and staff work should be carefully planned.

8. suggest who is eligible to work on the publication and what will be expected of them.

9. emphasize individualized instruction and allow for individual differences in the staffers' abilities to learn. The adviser points out weak areas, makes students confident of what they can do, and makes sure that every staff member has an opportunity to develop as fully as possible his or her potential within the framework of the publication goals.

10. explain to students their legal press rights.

11. help students develop a sense of ethical performance and principles.

12. carefully explain the functions of the publication for the publics it serves.

13. be prepared to remove those who do not respond to coaching and appoint others to take their places.

14. employ the "we" approach in working with the staff. Students are open to suggestion but not to having someone make their decisions for them.

15. use his or her position to instruct, recognizing that he or she is in a position to teach very effectively whether the publication is organized within the framework of a formal class or as an extracurricular activity.

16. be familiar with the values to be derived by staff members and school alike from the publication.

17. be alert and positive.

18. avoid vacillation.

19. be a pleasant leader.

(Items 1 through 8 are essentially journalistic skills. Items 9 through 19 are essentially educational principles necessary for effective advising.)

VALUES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATIONS TO THE STAFF MEMBERS AND THE SCHOOL

School publications

1. provide highly important communication opportunities.
2. provide media for the exchange of student ideas.
3. provide students with experience in working toward definite, tangible goals and help develop qualities of cooperation, tact, tolerance, organization, and leadership.
4. provide opportunities for students to develop self-expression and creative ability through these outlets for journalistic, photographic, artistic, business, and literary talent.
5. help to develop skill in accurate, concise, creative, and forceful expression of ideas.
6. foster the writing of acceptable English.
7. portray school and student life.
8. can promote understanding among groups within the school community.
9. preserve the history of the school.
10. acquaint new students with the ideals, traditions, and activities of the school.
11. can help to develop student initiative and responsibility.
12. promote scholarship.
13. provide a teaching tool to help develop critical attitudes toward all types of publications and to establish standards for evaluating them.
14. promote an understanding of the role of journalism in American society.

(Items 1 through 10 are outcomes of journalistic activity. Items 11 through 14 are abstract outcomes derived more from the educational process.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

All Student Publications

All effective student publications

1. need
   a. adequate financing.
   b. a well-qualified adviser who enjoys such an assignment.
   c. freedom of content selection by the student staff.
      (All student publications should be free from censorship by the adviser, any school administrator, or anyone else not on the publications staff.)

2. provide an essential channel to inform students of their school community. Because of this, all or as many students as possible should receive copies of each publication.

3. must be accurate, truthful, independent, sincere, impartial, decent, and fair, as defined by the staff, not outsiders or school administrators. Helpful guidelines to these attributes include "The Canons of Journalism," "The Journalist's Creed," "Criteria of a Good Newspaper," and the "Code of Ethics" of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

4. should have a written statement of policies that is accepted by the staff, adviser, principal, superintendent, and school board as official school policy. The statement should be reviewed for possible revision at least once a year, and the staff, adviser, principal, superintendent, and school board should suggest improvements.

5. should have an adviser who has completed a minor or a major in journalism or mass media.

6. may be most effectively operated through a publications board that reviews and provides policies, selects principal staff members, looks for solutions to problems, supervises financial matters, and provides ideas for good publications. Chairman of this board should be a publications adviser or journalism teacher.

7. expect top editors to have gained prior experience on the publication or to have completed a journalism course. No publication should be staffed entirely by inexperienced or beginning students.

8. should have adequate facilities and equipment available to them.

9. should not cater to cliques, clubs, classes, or elites nor allow them to use the publications for their own propaganda or purposes. Neither should they ignore the interests or rights of special interest groups but should attempt to report them adequately and objectively.

10. are creative. The best journalism is creative, not imitative, subject to limitations only of known ineffective journalistic techniques.

11. should
    a. motivate the learning and practice of language skills.
    b. develop skill in the accurate, concise, creative, and forceful expression of ideas and facts.
    c. help students understand how to communicate clearly.

The Student Newspaper

The effective student newspaper

1. should be published at least once every two weeks to fulfill the information function for the school.

2. should be considered a necessary and integral part of the journalism instructional program in all aspects, including photography, advertising, business management, circulation, and production as well as writing and editing.

3. has as its principal functions:
    a. to report news of interest and consequence to the student community.
    b. to interpret the news.
    c. to provide leadership by commenting or editorializing upon the news and providing a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism on current and often controversial issues.
    d. to entertain, amuse, and intellectually stimulate readers.
    e. to develop fiscal stability to insure continuous publication.

News

4. reports current ideas, events, and problems that affect students and their community. The account of the news should be truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent, and in a context that gives it meaning.

5. constantly looks for opportunities for depth reporting based on thorough investigation.

6. looks for local angles to city, state, national, and world topics, emphasizing how those topics affect students and emphasizing exposition and analysis.

7. asks the principal to conduct a news conference or to be interviewed before each issue to clarify news about the school.

8. in news reporting
    a. recognizes "good" news as well as "bad" news, the positive as well as the negative.
    b. avoids adopting the role of advocate or adversary but emphasizes fair play.
    c. avoids sensationalizing the news or playing up only one side.
    d. avoids allowing bias, prejudice, or convictions to modify getting and writing the news.

9. makes special efforts to solicit publishable news and entertainment material from students who are not on the staff.

Leadership

10. includes representative information and opinions of the constituent groups that make up the school.

11. in its editorial and opinion columns
    a. does not ask adults or non-staff members to write editorials. (It may interview them as the basis for an editorial or encourage them to write letters to the editor or other opinion pieces, such as "perspective" columns.)
    b. does not write in haste, anger, or impatience.
    c. demonstrates courage by supporting desirable but unpopular causes or by examining controversial issues.
    d. does not scold, whine, nag, preach, sneer, grumble, or stress negative or immature attitudes. These are ineffective approaches to communication.
    e. does not encourage attitudes or opinions that lead to misunderstandings between individuals, groups, or races.
    f. supplements editorials with reviews, depth pieces, surveys, columns, cartoons, and photographic editorials.
    g. addresses such topics as ecology and environment, alcohol and drugs, family relationships, politics, hunger and poverty, marriage and divorce, employment, health, safety, law, and order.

Entertainment

12. publishes entertaining stories that also are informative and often helpful to readers.

13. helps its readers solve their recreation, family, interpersonal, and other problems.

14. publishes features and entertainment pieces that include
    a. interpretive pieces that probe an issue or topic, give all sides, attempt to explain and give possible solutions without advocating.
    b. experience pieces that use narrative and description.
    c. human interest pieces that tell unusual incidents adroitly and briefly; they can be light or serious.
    d. personality sketches that report in depth on an individual, clearly showing what he or she is like while minimizing routine facts such as birthplace, birthdate, likes, and dislikes.
    e. historical and seasonal pieces on anniversaries, special days and weeks, and seasons.
    f. how-to-do-it pieces.
    g. puzzles, cartoons, humor columns, feature photographs, poems, short stories, parodies, and essays.

Fiscal Stability

15. must be solvent to serve. The board of education and school administrators should
    a. determine whether students can afford to buy single copies or subscriptions regularly.
    b. determine whether students constitute a significant consumer market which will be attractive to prospective advertisers.
    c. authorize solicitation of subscriptions, sale of single copies, and solicitation of local advertising by school publication staffs.
    d. approve a financing plan using instructional funds and student activity fees to supplement subscription and advertising income to create a solid financial base for the newspaper. When necessary, supplementary funds should be provided to avoid nonjournalistic sources of income.

16. helps merchants reach its student market through its advertising columns.

17. has its financial situation reviewed at a meeting of the editor, business manager, and adviser at least once a month.

18. establishes budget control so that it does not spend so much early in the year that it short changes its readers late in the year.

19. includes in its budgets adequate amounts for school press conferences, summer workshops, staff library, supplies, postage, evaluation services, and printing. (A common mistake is to spend a disproportionate amount on printing and far too little on the other important items.)

20. establishes a reserve fund to be available in emergencies.

21. promotes advertising with letters, consumer data, presentations, and frequent solicitations.

22. uses timely sales messages and effective illustrations or graphics in advertisements to sell specific goods and services.

23. fully trains solicitors in how to sell advertising and how to service advertisers' accounts.

The School Yearbook

The effective school yearbook

1. thoroughly reports 12 months of student and school life and activities.

2. should be considered a necessary and integral part of the journalism instructional program in all aspects, including photography, advertising, business management, circulation, and production as well as writing and editing.

3. gives emphasis to photographs of action and real situations and minimizes posed, inactive photographs.

4. uses a variety of reporting techniques (depth, interpretive, investigative, conversational, news, survey, narrative, personalized, interview, and others) to present each aspect of the year most effectively.

5. uses journalistically sound headlines and captions as well as photographs and reporting.

6. achieves the highest journalistic standards of accuracy, truth, fairness, independence, impartiality, decency, and sincerity, as explained in "The Canons of Journalism."

7. uses effective, expressive typography and graphic devices that enhance the effectiveness of the content and its presentation.

8. tailors its theme, structure, and reporting patterns to its own school for this year.

9. seeks staff members with diverse talents and diverse points of view to be as representative as possible in reporting the year.

10. places as much emphasis on the business staff as the editorial staff in order to follow successful business practices and remain solvent.

11. insists that advertisements be individually and distinctively designed and written to attract attention and to sell goods or services for the advertiser.

12. maintains a staff recruiting and training program that assures that top editors will be knowledgeable and experienced in yearbook journalism and that students in all classes within the school can join the staff if interested.

13. in planning coverage of the year consciously attempts to present an adequate and balanced report of student life, academics, organizations and clubs, sports, students, and faculty.

14. has a title page to identify the book and school and a contents listing, page numbers, and a complete index as services to help readers find specific content in which they are interested.

15. has its own room or office and a resource center of helpful materials, including the best journalism books on techniques and ideas applicable to yearbook journalism.

16. develops fiscal stability as specified for The Student Newspaper in Items 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

17. provides students with opportunities for
    a. creative, imaginative writing.
    b. excellent photography.
    c. artistic design.

Student Magazines

1. Because of the diversity of types and purposes of magazines, a school may have several different magazines.

2. An effective student magazine should have a clear statement of objectives or editorial purpose so that all concerned know what it is attempting to do.

3. Magazines may be published by different academic areas, such as a literary magazine by the English program, an art magazine by the art program, or a science magazine by the science program.

4. Each magazine should have an adviser qualified in magazine journalism as its principal adviser or associate adviser.

5. Student magazines may be published as infrequently as once each year. Other than a newsmagazine, few could be published more than three or four times a year.

Other Publications

1. Other publications may be undertaken as appropriate. These may include printed programs for athletic events, programs for special school events, newsletters, student handbooks, guidebooks, or manuals.

2. Each publication should have a clear statement of objectives, purposes, or editorial concept.

3. Each publication should have adequate financing, access to adequate facilities, and a competent adviser.

Unauthorized Student Publications

1. Students have a constitutional right to publish publications not formally approved or authorized by the school, frequently called "underground" publications.

2. School authorities may not impose prior restraint (censorship) upon publications that are not part of the school program.

3. School authorities may restrict distribution to certain times and places, such as before school, lunch period, or after school in places that will not impede traffic flow or cause material and substantial disruption to school operations, but they may not prohibit distribution.

4. Students may write and publish anonymously, and school authorities have no right to require the identity of the author of any article or editorial.